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VERSES

BY
W. B. COTTON
INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE

" Wait till you come to forty year ! "
W. M. THACKERAY.

New York
R. HAROLD PAGET
1912

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VERSES

ON PRESENTING A MATCHBOX TO A LADY

Madam in your sweet company
What need have I of matches,
When at one glance from your bright eyes
My heart on fire catches?

TO A LADY

What shall I call you, sweet?
  Blue sky amid gray clouds showing,
Scent of a rose at eve,
  Cool breath of morning blowing.

Only to dream of you, sweet,
  In the lonely long night watches!
In the land of the might have been,
  Where sleeping with waking marches.

There I may meet you, sweet?
  Forgetting in bliss divine,
That after the dream is ended
  I never may call you mine.

THE BREAK OF THE RAINS

Not a leaf stirs, the very air doth swoon,
The melancholy music of the night
Languishes utterly, the hum of wings,
Crickets' thin serenade, rustle of creeping things,
That swell out nature's nocturne.
In yonder glen, where rocks sleep in the water,
And feathery bamboos dream their lives away,
The brindled monarch of the woods, his limbs relaxed,
Lies panting, eyes half closed.
The heat grows greater, one by one the stars
Are blotted from the vaulted arch of heaven,
From the horizon comes the sullen growl
Of distant thunder, lightning's sudden gleam
Maps out the landscape; last, a cool breath,
The rain.

RED AND WHITE ROSES

I walked with my love in a garden of roses,
Red and white roses upon the same tree,
And thought of my love as I looked at these roses
Entangled in clusters so charming to see,
And I knew that these roses must carry some message,
And long thought in vain about what it might be,
Till I looked at my live, and I found she was blushing;
This white rose to others was a red rose to me.

A BIRD'S SONG

When the daylight was dying,
And the sad wind was sighing,
And the gray clouds were hanging
Like a pall,
And the shadows came creeping
'Neath the trees that were weeping,
Till darkness descended
Over all,
One sweet bird 'gan singing
With note clear and ringing
"Soon the night of our sorrow
Will be done,
And life's weary tangle
With joy shall commingle,
And the dull stream shall sparkle
In the sun."

A TRAIN OF THOUGHT

What is sweeter than the sunlight
After rain,
When the birds begin to carol
Once again,
And a gentle summer breeze
Dries the tear-drops on the trees,
Which in dreamy minor keys
Do complain?

What is purer than the moonlight
On the ground,
Drawing her pale silver mantle
All around,
So doth beauty proud deny
All response to lover's sigh,

While the very earth doth lie
In a swound?

What is softer than the starlight
In the hour
When the lover his fond story
Doth outpour,
And the sweet half-hidden face
From the dark takes heart of grace,
And the moth receives a kiss
From the flower?

AN ANSWER

What is sweeter than the sunlight?
Tell me, lover!
Surely were the daylight
Gone for ever,
Thus I would the hours of darkness
Best beguile,
In remembering a
Woman's smile.

What is purer than the moonlight?
Why so simple
Riddles do you ask me,
When the dimple
Dancing on the water in her
Clearest beams
Is the mirror of a
Woman's dreams?

What is softer than the starlight?
Well, I really
Cannot but confess I
Think your early
Education you neglected
And surmise,
Never gazed into a
Woman's eyes.

THE LAND OF DREAMS

As dusk began to fall I rode along,
While in my mind I roamed sweet thoughts among,
And to the memory of dead heartsease
Hoof-beats sang sad persistent melodies,

Which seemed to draw the veil from worlds unseen,
And to remind me of what might have been,

Fanning the ashes of a past desire
Till they once more again burst into fire.

Once more I heard the voice I loved so well,
And on my face the rain in kisses fell,
Soft in the wind I heard my own love sigh,
In whose sweet company the miles slipped by.

Surely for this soft bliss I did atone—
When all the world had held but us alone—
As in the porch the lantern's fitful gleams
Ended the journey through the land of dreams.

AN ALLEGORY

A moth was flying here and there
    One summer eve,
And came across a perfume rare
    Which did deceive,
And perched upon a glass's rim
Full of sweet poison to the brim,

And sucked the golden liquor down
    An hour or more,
And wondered if the world could own
    More bliss in store,
And just escaped from being drowned
By falling down upon the ground.

At dawn the sufferer crawled away
    And went to bed,
Where in a corner kind it lay
    Its aching head,
And felt the world go round and round
While heaving earthquakes shook the ground.

This harm so worked upon its mood,
    Unhappy moth,
That until recently its food
    Was scraps of cloth.
The injured creature did believe
That every sweet thing did deceive.

Till wandering by chance through some
    Fair lady's bower,
The moth's good fortune 'twas to come
    Across a flower,

Filling the night air with a charm
That healed the moth of all its harm.

Arrested on its onward flight
When ceased the smart,
The moth took courage to alight,
With beating heart.
And till its little life did close
Endeavored to be near the rose.

'Twas thus the hurt inflicted by
Love's cruelty
On me, did find a balm in thy
Kind sympathy,
And like the moth I long to be
Still in thy sweet society.

A SOLILOQUY

If to love but the vain
Faint shade of desire
Is a cause of sweet pain,
And the ghost of a fire
The lone heart can burn,
Then what would it be
If some pitiful she
The love would return?

Some feminine being
So sweetly responsive
The mute appeal seeing
That lies in a plaintive
But half-expressed verse,
Might her lot with mine
Together combine
For better or worse.

If better, our days
We would dreamily pass
In a soft golden haze,
Till our sand through the glass
To the last grain did fall;
And if worse: then I think
From that chance I'd not shrink
To have been loved at all.

A LOCK OF HAIR

Sweetheart! One dear lock
Of that dark hair of thine,
Like the little green spiral
That hangs from the vine,
O'er thy soft brow is straying
Love's challenge conveying
So hard to decline.

For your heart, like that plant,
Round mine doth entwine
In a clinging caress,
And your looks are a wine,
To whose thoughtless assailing,
My strength unavailing,
Myself I resign.

Should a wanton lip taste
First the red, then the white—
Nay, bind it not up,
Nor a fond lover's plight,
By mock anger feigning
Or cruel disdaining,
Make desolate quite.

And let one swift glance
From those twin suns so bright
Heal the wound you inflicted,
While Fancy, her flight
Your lashes down-falling
Will aid, in recalling
The sweet hours of night.

TO A LADY

I thank thee, for that thou hast let me know
A woman's mind,
When else it had been my hard fate to go
For ever blind
To much that most men see and yet can pass
Unwittingly,
So thy dear virtues may I but rehearse
Befittingly.

And in the telling, if the careful tale
Fall any short,
Or if the halting words should sometimes fail
To match the thought,

Accepting the intention for the deed,
Forgive it me,
Whose only claim to goodness is the need
To worship thee.

For truly I do think that thou couldst nought
Of evil know,
But that when any shape of sin unsought
Itself did show
Some subtle woman's instinct warned thee still
To pass it by,
Nor with half-guessed-at harmful sights to fill
A curious eye.

Also the chiefest source of all thy joy
Is others' good,
In that no baser thoughts of self alloy
Thy radiant mood,
Wherefore approving angels have thee crowned
With happiness,
Seeing a being from their sphere has found
A home on this.

Thou couldst untroubled never stand and view
Another's pain,
But must at once thy constant aim pursue
To heal again,
Forgetting that perchance thine eyes may loose
Don Cupid's dart,
And, healing one wound, to the patient cause
More lasting smart.

And now from fear lest I should be accused
Of flattery,
A single failing should I be excused
If I copy?
That never woman was, I greatly fear,
Created yet
With like facility a tale could hear
And then forget.

THE COMING OF SLEEP

'Tis when the crowd of sweet tumultuous thoughts
Do mingle in the semblance of a dream
That kindly fairy-land doth ope its ports
To weary drifters on life's busy stream.

Amid a host of fond imagined things
The shadowy soul has liberty to roam,

And gather honey without fear of stings,
For never angry bee doth guard the comb.

No bitter memories nor vain regrets
Can live in that exalted atmosphere,
Where self its own identity forgets,
And past and future both do disappear.

In that far country one may pluck a rose,
And on one's breast may dare to wear the same,
And never fear the morrow shall disclose
The flower has been converted to a flame.

And if some love-sick swain should there elect
To worship at the shrine of beauty fair,
He will not find her ready to accept
The incense and reject the worshipper.

But ever passion meets with tenderness
And soft response from mute expressive eyes,
So soon down-dropped to veil their happiness
If the fond tyrant all too closely pries.

And long before love dies of weariness
Slumber assails the dreamer drowsily,
Locked in the arms of sweet forgetfulness,
Time for a while for him doth cease to be.

A LOVER'S COMPLAINT

Now listen, lady fair, to me
Poor victim of love's strategy,
    How craftily
The wanton little archer blind
Did with your eyes the target find,
    And wounded me.

Long time a sufferer at his hands,
I bound my heart in iron bands
    So carefully,
And locked it with a cunning key,
Forged in the fires of memory
    That burned in me.

A moment's respite did I seize,
The tyrant left me to my ease
    Deceitfully.

Then with what charming sorcery,
What sweet thief was it that stole the key?
Ah! Whisper me!

And was my late misdeed so plain,
That he should torture me again
So shamefully?
That, save by stretch of phantasie,
He should arrange that you and I
Could ne'er be we.

WOMAN

For answer doth appeal
The riddle woman,
The half-evolved ideal,
Whose aim is to conceal
Desires that men reveal,
Who reason less than feel,
Akin to no man.

Each charming quality
Is there depicted
In possibility.
Their ready sympathy
Can with each mood agree,
Till man's brutality
Its growth has stunted.

Then the perverted she
May seek his hindrance
Exploit with subtlety
His vein of cruelty,
Corrupt his honesty,
Till in catastrophe
She find her vengeance.

Yet the majority
Their weary burden
Do bear resignedly
With standfast loyalty,
All uncomplainingly,
And fond maternity
Becomes their guerdon.

But when like natures bind
A sweet alliance,
Alone doth womankind

Her true perfection find,
When lives are intertwined,
And both attune their mind
To glad compliance.

'Tis then alone we see
The perfect woman,
The surest guarantee
Of immortality,
With just a touch, maybe,
Of human frailty
To hang our love on.

FAREWELL

Dear Heart! was it a crime
That I loved thee,
When love's sweet summer-time
Could never be,
But save awakening
Of winter into spring,
Thou further couldst not bring
Life's joy to me.

And if a crime it was,
Great punishment
Do I deserve, because
My love I lent
Without security
It e'er repaid to see?
Yet how so great it be
Would I repent?

For is it a surprise
That fire should burn?
What lover love denies
Without return,
But cowardly doth shrink
The thought of self to sink,
The truest love I think
Can never learn.

And yet 'tis very hard
To bear my lot,
And for a parting word
So soon forgot
When thou shalt go away
For ever and a day,
To only dare to say
Forget me not.

A LOVER'S DIARY

At 6 a. m. I woke and thought of thee,
And vowed my love for thee should be eternal,
Supreme, illimitable as the sea,
Yet with reproach I greeted my infernal
Knit, who was late in bringing me my tea.

All through my morning ride how best to move
Thee wondered, until my exultant pack, all
Yelping at once, from a sequestered grove
Moved an affrighted and reluctant jackal,
And so compelled me to forget my love.

All day I dreamt how sweet to have a wife,
And watched the alband in the slippery shoe
Insert the devious nail misuse the knife,
Until my chestnut stepped upon my toe,
And gave a further interest to life.

'Tis after dark my spirits most do droop
And doubt will fate allow my lot to link
With thine, or whether thou to mine wilt stoop,
Whence my despair, but still I always think
I feel a little better after soup.

And so the weary day, till sleep relief
Affords, for ever doth a rod in pickle
Hang over me, of all mine ease the thief,
For I have heard that women are so fickle,
Which is the constant cause of all my grief.

LOVE'S GARDEN

How best recall my absent love to me,
Kind Flora, prithee, lend to me thine aid,
And in each flower my sweetheart I shall see,
More slender than the wood anemone,
Like springs of half-forgotten rosemary
In my mind's book in recollection laid
Her waist is like the leaning hyacinth,
Her breath the sweet oppression of the rose
Passing o'er rows of snowdrops white as milk,
While twin carnations add a taste of cloves,
And love entangled in the labyrinth
Upon these flowers contented doth repose.
Her little veins like violets do hide
Abashed beneath the lily's snowy pride
Her tiny ears are rosy orchids rare
Suspended in the meshes of her hair
And much unpardonable larceny
Would I commit could I become a bee.

AFTER THE HONEYMOON

Nay! blame me not, sweet,
Nor say that I let
Life's burden and heat
Cause me to forget
The vows that I made,
While yet is unpaid
The half of love's debt.

The stars disappear
On seeing the light,
Yet ever are there
Though hidden from sight,
So my love for thee
Concealed may be,
Fair queen of the night!

THE RISING MOON

The moon rose like a little boat
In which my love with me did float
So silently
Upon an undiscovered sea
Where never mortal else than we
Might ever be.
Amid the mazes of the stars
We two deserted wanderers
Our course did steer
By the pole-start of Constancy,
Which taught us both our path to see,
And never veer.

When to the star of love we came
My love's lips softly breathed the name
Fidelity.
As the night air the whisper bore
No duty found I e'er before
So sweet to me.

And when another star drew near
I named it, so my love should hear,
Sincerity,
That never shade of reticence
Should cloud the perfect confidence
'Twixt her and me.

Yet all too soon to dream was gone
For, creeping with the jealous dawn,
Reality
Reminded me the voyage begun
Ended e'er rising of the sun
Must ever be.

MEMORY

Since fate decreed that thou and I must part,
And never love's sweet plant a blossom show,
But only stamped thine image on my heart
Its sovereign for ever it should know.

Remembering the bliss of loving thee,
Of looking for an answer in thine eves,
Although I knew the dream must ended be,
The only prize the striving for the prize.

What matter when the sweet of love is gone,
If betterness remaineth at the last!
Shall I my squandered store too late bemoan?
Had ever love a future or a past?

THE ROSEBUD

A rosebud proclaimed
  That the store of its sweets
Should be unprofaned,
And never disdained
  The wandering air,
Or though that it harmed,
Till the pitiless fair
  Grew a rose unaware,
Whose neighbourhood charmed
  Whoever drew near.

A SATIRE

A woman, to enslave,
  And hold a heart in thrall,
However much she gave,
  Should never render all,

But ever a new charm
  Suggest a something more,
Till careless of all harm,
  Her victim doth explore,

To find her every thought
  Unconscious poetry,
And dream that he has caught
  A woman's mystery,

And never doth suspect
  The knowledge dearly bought,

Till he too late reflect
'Tis he that has been caught,

When strange though it appears,
He cherishes his pain,
And only this he fears
To be let loose again.

VENUS VICTRIX

Have you seen a woman's eyes
When the night
Shows the depth where hidden lies
Love's delight,
How the soul is unafraid,
And the deepening of the shade
Brings the fires which ever played
Into sight?

Never shone the evening star
Half so soft,
Did it climb up ne'er so far,
High aloft,
As these lights whose constant glow
Answers yes unto the foe,
Though the tongue should murmur no
Ne'er so oft.

Have you seen a woman's lips
When their hue
Red of rubies doth eclipse,
And the two
Pressed so lightly seem to close
Like the petals of a rose
Which the night air did expose
To the dew?

Though her thought she fain would crush
Ne'er so well,
On her cheek a carmine flush
Seems to tell
Of love's sacred mysteries,
And doth shade in slow degrees
To the tender pink one sees
In a shell.

While her form so seeming frail
Doth recline,
As upon a bush doth trail
Columbine,

While of love she mocks the birth,
Half in pity, half in mirth,
Like a being half of earth,
Half divine.

A GLANCE

As mirrored on the margin of a pool
The shadows play
Of weeping willows hiding in the cool
Before the day,
Upon her cheek in curves that love did rule
The lashes lay.

As when the summer zephyrs that arise
The waters stir
Sparkling, the shadow that around it lies
Both disappear
So lifting, love's sweet lightning in her eyes
Flashed forth more clear.

TO CIRCE

When those black eyes upon me fell,
And on me straightway cast a spell
That set my heart a-throbbing,
Their glances sweetly mischievous
Said if you'll only harbour us
Your rest we'll soon be robbing.

No sleep shall visit you at all
When once beneath my charm you fall,
But only fairy copies
Of my bright face shall haunt you there,
Until your lips shall everywhere
Seem brushed by wanton poppies.

And when you want you know not what,
Whate'er you feel, forget it not,
And from the pain no shirking,
That it was ever nature's plan
To turn a brute into a man,
By that same charm that's working.

A PROTEST

If only those who seek to bind
The workings of a poet's mind
Would let him be,
Nor with a vile construction soil

The product of his lonely toil
Through jealousy,
Believe his vain imaginings
Creations where the spirit wings
Its flight alone,
Nor envy him if unrepaid,
A fond flirtation with a shade
He carries on,
Beguiling the unbidden guest
Who wantonly doth mock his rest,
With flattery,
While he against the sweet attack
Unweaponed may in haste ransack
Love's armoury:
Then what a host of pretty things
One whispers oftener than sings
Might soon be said,
Which now, for fear of others' mock,
The dreamer is compelled to lock
Within his head!

BITTER-SWEET

The fire that lies in woman's eyes
And tells of love awoken,
The unconscious sighs, the fond surmise,
The word that's never spoken,

The purpose chance, the meaning glance,
That sets the brain a-glowing
While pulses dance, is beauty's lance,
To all the gauntlet throwing.

The tender phase, th' averted gaze,
The eyes so shy of meeting,
She next displays, but ever lays
An ambush in retreating,

Her recreant swain to call again,
And all lost ground recover,
She turns again, and mocks his pain,
And calls another lover,

Till he shall learn the jealous burn
Of watching envious doveing,
And doth return again to earn
The bitter-sweet of loving.

A LOVER'S COMPLAINT

Sweet! when I drank dear poison at thine eyes,
Whose fire has fanned
And fed the lingering fever that defies
Time's healing hand,
The love that craves and never satisfies
Whate'er it planned.

Sweet! did you know the heritage of pain
You left to me,
The glory that can never come again
Bereft from me,
The fondest dream that man could dream in vain
Vouchsafed to me?

Sweet! was the easy victory you won
So dear to thee?
Sweet! did you know a man could have but one
Divinity?
Sweet! do you know you left my world undone
In wounding me?

AN ENTREATY

Sweetheart, why so proud?
Ne'er so white the cloud,
Ne'er so soft the flush
In the sunset glow,
As thy cheek of snow
Mantling in a blush.

Hair as dark as night
And as soft and light
As the airs that blow,
And the stars more bright
Sparkle in delight
When thy dark eyes glow.

Neck and throat divine
Drooping like the pine
'Neath its weight of snow,
Lips in their repose,
Envy of the rose,
Soft as Cupid's bow.

Voice as sweet and low
As a streamlet's flow
Where the waters' dance
Seems to say aloud
"Sweetheart, why so proud,
Sweetheart, but a glance."

LIBERTY

How shall a strayed heart pass away
A melancholy holiday
Now love is dead?
A victim freed from slavery
Defying in his liberty
A tyrant sped!

'Tis as a day when, spent the gale,
And not a breath to swell the sail,
The banks slide past,
While down the stream the eddies churn,
And sometimes bow and sometimes stern
Doth travel first.

Ah! would some charming creature deign,
To swell the sail of love again,
I'd steer the course;
Should the sweet tyrant with her eyes
Unload the cargo of my sighs,
I'd bear the loss.

A DREAM

A wisp of cloud, half drawn athwart the moon,
A sigh of leaves soft stirring in the night,
The hot, faint scent of heather bells at noon,
The throb of water falling far from sight,
A water-lily sleeping till it soon
Shall stir, and turn, and open in delight.

A TEAR

A lady's eyes where soft delight
Now shy sparkled into sight,
Now stole awhile away,
Like lightning on a summer night,
First showed my heart the path aright,
Then left it all astray.

To chase a phantom happiness,
And dream a soft surrendered kiss
The sweeter for delay
When the first moment of our bliss
Should fill up all the emptiness
For ever and a day.
Till, chancing to look up again,
I saw their light was dim with pain
And tender sympathy,
Forgive me, sweet, if I profane
Your thought and say that you did deign
Perchance to pity me.

THE COTILLON

As butterflies, 'neath summer skies,
Go dancing o'er the clover,
Or for a prize where honey lies
May for an instant hover,

Now here and there, now everywhere,
The radiant host doth glitter,
Each loiterer a glance doth stir,
To straightway onward flitter,

With colours bright to mock the sight,
With coy advance enrapture,
And still delight to take their flight
When on the eve of capture.

TO A LADY

To try my love in fancy to portray
Then paint the blush of dawn in disarray
When sunrise wakes her dreaming of the day.

A zephyr stirring on a summer night
Her breath might rival, when with shy delight
It roused the flowers with kisses in affright.

And her soft eyes, my joy and my despair,
Where in the sweet disorder of her hair
Lies beauty's self enmeshed, are a pair

Of purple edged convolvuli, which cling
So timidly, till the o'ershadowing
Fringes of night have veiled their shimmering.

A REPROACH

Sweetheart, in yonder eyes
Think how a captive lies
Bound and forgotten!
Or 'neath those crystal spheres
Were love's sweet hopes and fears
Never begotten?

Never in solitude
Did there a thought intrude
Into the muster
Of a life's history
Lightning the mystery
Up with love's lustre?

Buried within the mine
Many a gem divine,
Wasted and darkling,

Might to love's firmament
Have a new planet lent,
  Rising and sparkling.

Close must the prison be
Guarding the soul of thee
  Safe from disaster,
Or doth a vacant hall
Harbour no guest at all
  Welcome no master?

AN ENTREATY

I know not if there be
Use in entreating thee,
  Sweetheart of mine,
But not a thought of thee
Even in scorn of me
  Would I resign.

Dark though the vault of blue
Yet the stars peeping through
  Tell of the light,
Sending a hope to me
Absent and far from thee
  Here in the night.

There in the distant skies
Beauty eclipsed lies
  As in a dream,
Yet from her half-closed lids
Just one soft ray she bids
  Tenderly beam,

Bidding her worshipper
Lose not all hope of her,
  Until the dawn,
Closing the mockery
In cold reality,
  Finds me forlorn.

A MESSAGE

Upon a wintry, leafless bower
There hung a pale, proud passion flower,
  Its purple blossoms clinging
In clusters to the dreary home
Where this dear plant had chanced to roam,
  Its joy and fragrance bringing.

A desolate forgotten place
This sweetest flower had deigned to grace,
Its slender tendrils twining
About the long neglected spot,
As if to mitigate its lot
And soothe its sad repining.

Where all was drear and sorrowing
It brought a message of the spring
This queen of all the garden,
Awakening the wilderness
To memories of happiness,
Despair to hope of pardon.

THE SNOWS

Long hath the rosy flush upon the snow
Departed with the sunset's afterglow,
And the long day is but a memory
Where love and sorrow mingle, and the pain
And joy alike are hushed in sleep again,
With nature singing them a lullaby,

And still the shadows deepen, as the night
Would closer veil her secrets from the sight
Of the too curious stars and hide away
A something which men worship, as a dream
Which the fond worshipper would surely deem
Too sacred for the light of common day,

Till o'er the mountain tops the moon doth ris
And shed a gentle radiance o'er the skies,
When the lone watcher now may deem he see,
Where'er a range of snowy peaks doth rear
Its summit in the clear, cold atmosphere,
Beauty with honour in her company.

A SNARE

My sweetheart's hair lay tangled in a net,
Spun by a cupid out of idlness,
To make a prisoner in wantonness,
And 'neath the gossamer a snare to set.

So craftily the stratagem was laid
That every straying lock seemed unconfined,
And unrebuked to dally with the wind,
That constantly a sweet disorder made,

As playing hide and seek among the light
And shadow of her softly swelling curves,

And kissing all the flowers in love's preserves,
Before it murmured them a fond goodnight,

Leaving the air with softest whispers rife,
The inconstant wanderer would take his flight,
Lost in the meshes of his late delight
The zephyr is a prisoner for life.

TO ROSALIND

What recollection of delight
To every separate charm indict
That capture held my raptured sight
In looking on fair Rosalind.

As flashes through the sunlit air
The blue wing of a kingfisher
And vanishes as soon as there
So shines a glance of Rosalind.

When in the west the daylight dies
The dusk broods o'er the starry skies,
So shadowing her radiant eyes
Lies the dark hair of Rosalind.

A mossrose bursting on the air
Was erstwhile held a prisoner
Till 'scaped the tangles of her hair
The ear of lovely Rosalind.

And only one thing I deplore,
A fault that often vexed me sore,
No lady in the world before
Was half so cross as Rosalind.

FOR AN ALBUM.

My lady keeps an album where her friends
Display their skill in rhyming me with thee,
And call upon some fascinating she,
In a duet of most unhappy lovers,
No more to tortue some devoted he,
With other daring flights of phantasy
Around Parnassus, ere the poem ends,
And we can only hope the swain recovers.

She wants a contribution to this pile
Of human documents, reminds me twice
Of my neglect, threatens me with the price
Of friendship lost or set at least in danger
Of being lost, unless in half a trice

I write some verses. Follows my advice
To this fair lady, in didactic style,
To which perchance her album is a stranger.

Madam! a fixed unalterable law
For your consideration I perpend.
Should you your most profound attention lend
The reason of this law you will discover.
Your mind will to a like conclusion tend,
That any verses written to a friend
Must prove a most unmitigated bore,
To write a poem one must be a lover.

THE HAPPY LOVER.

And English flower transplanted
My love to me was granted,
To rest mine eyes
'Neath alien skies
Upon a land enchanted,

Where in the soft spring weather
Sweet hyacinths together
Do seek the light
Or hide from sight,
A straying glance to tether

That all too soon discloses
The secret of the posies,
That love, they say,
Should wear some day
The blush of the wild roses;

But in that gentle Maying
The flowerets were saying
How love was dight
In snowy white
The lily pure portraying.

TO HIS MISTRESS.

Nay! harbour not a fixed intent
To punish me with banishment
Nor quench a ray of sunlight sent
To pierce a prison wall,
And aid a soul that captive lies
A fairy ladder to devise
Where fancy may attain the skies
And drop her fetters all,

And in the regions of the air
The erstwhile mournful prisoner
That happiness may hope to share
  The common right of all,
When love the tyrant spreads his wings
And beauty sheds on common things,
And nature's silent music sings
  Of Eden ere the Fall.

Till jealousy the dusk creeps down
And dims the lustre of love's crown;
Once more the prison walls do frown
  And solitude again
Asserts his wonted mastery,
With the poor lamp of memory
Alone to pierce the gloom for me
  And light his weary reign.

ON GUARD.

When love the tyrant whispers low
Howe'er so sweet the pulse's flow,
The wounded heart still fears a foe
And cries, Halt! who goes there?

Friend! but erstwhile in such disguise,
Beneath the very sentry's eyes,
A foe hath entered paradise
And robbed the treasure there.

So howso great the charm that lies
And sparkles in a woman's eyes,
The wounded heart forever cries
Halt! friend, the countersign!

It nevermore its watch abates,
But bars the passage through its gates,
And for the answer lonely waits
To say, Pass friend! all's well!

THE SENTENCE.

A vagrant zephyr erstwhile robbed the rose,
  In fact he stole her perfume with his breath,
She to the court her story did disclose
  And for his felony, the story saith
This sentence on the zephyr they impose:
  To wander evermore on pain of death.

Sighing the zephyr softly stole away,
Bearing along the odour of the rose,
A silent witness of its larceny,
Eternally to banish its repose,
Till glittering o'er the dying light of day
Above the trees a crescent moon arose.

As through the dark a ray of moonlight fell,
A snowy slender aloe shaft did loom,
Which bending softly shook each fairy bell
In laughter, as it floated in the gloom,
And guided by this charming sentinel,
The lonely wanderer forgot his doom.

And passed into a garden of delight
Of waving palms and trailing aspen trees
Which softly whispered in the air of night,
Awoken by the stirring of the breeze,
And gently bade the zephyr stay his flight
To pause awhile and dream the night at ease.

'Mid slumbering bees and moonlight over all
The zephyr died among the sleeping flowers;
No sorceress, I ween, did ever call
More willing captive to her scented bowers,
To dare whatever fortune may befall,
In hope to gain a few brief happy hours.

THE GIPSY MAID.

Among the beauties of the town
There is a maid with tresses brown
Which hangs in sweet disorder down,
So soft and dark and straying.

Love's finger print must surely be
Where, slender as anemone,
Her rosy nape unveiled you see,
The traitor hairs displaying.

Her lily cheeks the sun has kissed
Till love lies hid within a mist
GALLEY EIGHT
Of gold, until the rogue doth list
To send her thoughts astraying.

And then the roses hide the white
And gold alike; a pretty sight
To see the beauty's cheeks alight,
Were love but gone a-maying.

'Neath lashes black the gipsy tries
To veil the glances of her eyes,
Where plain to view the laughter lies
At all this swain is saying.

WINDERMERE

The slender silver birches sway
Their tender green where zephyrs play
At hide and seek ere break of day
Whilst still the stars are peeping,
Ere yet the skylark's melody
Has broken on night's mystery,
And half the world lies shadowy
And all the world lies sleeping.

The rowans climb the mountain side,
Their clusters flinging far and wide,
Like beauty's lips all scarlet dyed
When love, the tyrant, taking
A woman with his witchery,
Has left her in a reverie
Where nature seeks a harmony
With never an awaking.

No sound but water murmuring;
To every slope the fir trees cling
Till every zephyr wandering
Can added sweetness borrow;
Around the lake a shadow lies
Like fringed lids of beauty's eyes
Ere daylight floods the morning skies
And brings another morrow.

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